REMARKS

Claims 1-52 were cancelled and 53-83 were presented for consideration in a previous amendment. Claims 1-52 were also subject to a restriction. The Examiner issued a Notice of Non-Compliant amendment stating that the new claims 53-83 did not fall with the elected group of claims, namely, 1-24 and 29-52. The group of claims initially elected by the Applicants were drawn to an electronic commerce method and storage medium, classified in class 705, subclass 26. The Applicants submit herewith new claims 53-100 for examination. Claims 53-100 are within the scope of the elected invention previously selected by the Applicants.

Morever, claims 1-24 and 29-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over a combination of an article "Searching for .COM-ponents" by Harbert (Harbert), a press release "DesignWin Upgrade Tackles Key OEM Supply Chain Management Issues" (DesignWin), and U.S. Patent No. 5,712,985 issued to Johnson et al. (Johnson). Claims 1-52 were cancelled in a previous action. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 53-100 are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons presented herein. No new matter has been entered. Support for new claims 53-100 may be found throughout the specification and within the drawings.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1-24 and 29-52 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over a combination of Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson. As indicated above, claims 1-52 have been cancelled and new claims 53-100 presented for consideration. The Applicants' submit that new claims 53-100 are patentable over Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson because none of Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson, either alone or in combination, teach or make obvious each of the elements recited in Applicants' claims 53-100.

New claims 53, 66, 77, and 90 recite methods and storage mediums for managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment. Claims 53, 66, 77, and 90 recite specifically "identifying purchase prices of components that are incurred by the at least one supply chain entity that manufactures products using the components, the products subject to purchase by the manufacturing enterprise under an agreement with the at least one supply chain entity;

comparing the purchase prices incurred by the at least one supply chain entity with purchase prices available to the manufacturing enterprise for the same components from a component supplier;

for components in which the at least one supply chain entity incurs a purchase price greater than the purchase price available to the manufacturing enterprise, generating and transmitting to the component supplier a request to authorize the at least one supply chain entity to purchase a quantity of the component from the component supplier at the purchase price available to the manufacturing enterprise;

in response to an affirmative response by the component supplier, generating and transmitting an authorization letter to the at least one supply chain entity, the authorization letter authorizing the at least one supply chain entity to purchase the component directly from the component supplier."

None of these elements are taught or made obvious by Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson, either alone or in combination. In particular, none of the cited references teach or make obvious requesting authorization from a component supplier to provide prices for selected components to the supply chain entity that performs manufacturing activities for a manufacturer under an agreement. Nor does any of the cited references teach or make obvious providing authorization to the supply chain entity to purchase the selected components directly from the component supplier in response to approval of the request for authorization. For at least these reasons, the Applicants submit that claims 53, 66, 77, and 90 are patentable over Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections of claims 53, 66, 77, and 90.

Claims 54-65 depend from what should be an allowable claim 53, claims 67-76 depend from what should be an allowable claim 66, claims 78-89 depend from what should be an allowable claim 77, and claims 91-100 depend from what should be an allowable claim 90. For at least these reasons, the Applicants submit that claims 54-65, 67-76, 78-89, and 91-100 are also patentable over Harbert, DesignWin, and Johnson. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 09-0458.

Respectfully submitted,

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